

Indiana's Recycled Tire Project

An innovative athletic field improvement project is now underway on Indiana athletic fields. Five Indiana schools, the State of Indiana and Ford Motor Company have initiated a special project that will enhance the turf of the Indiana's athletic fields. With land for athletic fields at a premium, extending the life of existing surfaces with this initiative is strategic for every school district and park district in the state.



IDEM recycling staff take a close look at an athletic field at the Main Street Field in Beech Grove. This area demonstrates the impact that competitive sports can have on athletic turf. This particular area shows stress from intense action in the goal box of a high school soccer field.

Crumb rubber is applied with specialized equipment and will be accomplished through 3-5 applications. This project is especially beneficial for fields that receive heavy use.

Benefits of the Recycled Rubber Athletic Field Application:

- Create a cushion between the grass and soil, protecting the crown of the grass
- Reduce turf wear
- Lessen soil compaction
- Improve traction in all weather conditions
- Enhance moisture absorption and retention, reducing the amount of watering required.
- Strengthen the root structure
- Provide a cushioned surface for the student-athlete.

Five Indiana schools are participating in this pilot project to rubberize their athletic turf.

- 1) Beech Grove High School
- 2) Ben Davis High School
- 3) Decatur Central School
- 4) Lake Central High School
- 5) Taylor University



The crumb rubber is delivered in “super-sacks” which hold 3750 pounds of material. The material is lifted over the application vehicles and the rubber falls into the hopper. The loading process takes no more than two minutes.



Turf Solutions applies 45,000 pounds of crumb rubber on the first application. A second and third application will occur during the treatment on one field.





The application is closely monitored for an even application. The operators use markers to ensure a uniform layer of material over the entire field. Two application vehicles are used and one soccer field application can be completed in 2-3 hours time. The velocity at which the equipment disperses the rubber forces it down into the turf.

At closer look at the turf reveals a eighth to a quarter inch layer of crumb rubber over the entire site. This is the protection that the plants need to endure the stress of a sport season.



The rubber is most noticeable in areas without vegetation. The contractor incorporates the rubber into the soil. If the intensive revegetation efforts by the field maintenance crew are successful, the grass will grow through the rubber and benefit from its protective properties.



As this program expands, Indiana scrap tires will be recycled and applied on all types of athletic fields and high traffic grass areas. Recycled crumb rubber use is growing in number of application areas. These include asphalt, playground materials, animal mats and artificial turf. Protecting natural grass athletic fields is potentially a very strategic program for the State of Indiana.